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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent a set of teacher competencies thought to be generic were considered to be essential by all teachers regardless of their subject or level. A list of 52 competencies was compiled to be submitted to participants in a comprehensive survey of education professionals--elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, college faculty, and education specialists. Of the 52 statements, 33 were rated by the respondents to be within a range that included the rank of "highly desirable" or "essential." It is inferred that there are particular teacher competencies that may be considered to be generic. The suggestion is made that these competencies be used as valid assessment instruments for teacher certification purposes. (JD)

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Verifying Teacher Competencies for Their Generic Qualities

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The purpose of this investigation was to determine the extent to which an identified set of teacher competencies thought to be generic actually possessed generic qualities. Here competencies are performances or responsibilities which have been named by some authority as essential to the conduct of a profession or technical pursuit. Generic teaching competencies are those which are essential for all teachers regardless of subject or level.

Methods and/or Techniques

The first research activity of this investigation was a search for existing lists of generic teacher competencies. Research findings published in professional literature, and working lists produced by various institutions were reviewed. The total number of separate statements obtained from the various selected sources were consolidated so as to eliminate duplicate items. This resulted in a total of 52 edited statements.

These 52 generic competencies formed the content for a survey instrument which was used to obtain the opinions of professional educators who were asked to tell the extent to which each competency should be regarded as essential, highly desirable, or desirable for all teachers. The option "none of these" was also an alternate response.

This paper was printed in the United States of America and presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada, March 27 through 31, 1978 by Dr. Charles E. Johnson, principal investigator. A more comprehensive presentation of the content of this paper will be found in: Johnson, C.E. et al. Identifying and Verifying Generic Teacher Competencies, Athens, Georgia 30602: College of Education, University of Georgia, 1978. 133 pp. Copies are available at cost. Send inquiries to the principal author.

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The instrument was administered by project staff to participants in group meetings held in 153 public schools across the state and in 31 colleges and universities. At each session the participants were given an orientation to the purpose of the activity and told how the data would be used. This was followed by a question period. Then the survey instrument was administered.

Participants responded three times to each competency statement on a one-page scanner form. First they were asked how important the competency was for the enhancement of learning; next, how important for a beginning teacher; and finally, how important for a teacher seeking renewable certification. The highest possible response for any particular competency statement was a 3 which represented essential. The next highest was 2 for highly desirable, and 1 was used for desirable. A space was provided for zero (0) which was used for "none of these".

Two sets of scores were obtained from the survey data: the mean scores for each selected subgroup of teaching specialties on each of the 52 competencies, and the "essential score". This latter score was the percent of respondents in any subgroup which gave a particular competency the highest score that could be awarded.

The data were analyzed to determine which competency statements consistently were rated highest when all subgroup data were compared, and the extent to which subgroups concurred as to priority which should be assigned to the competency statements.

Data Sources

The sample was drawn in such a manner as to be representative of the total population of Georgia's educators. See Tables 1 through 3. In developing sampling specifications, attention was given to population distribution, census classifications (metropolitan, urban, and rural), subjects and levels taught, and professional roles (e.g., teacher, principal, teacher educator).

The total number of respondents was 4,668. The sampling confidence for the total set of respondents was 99.90; for elementary teachers it was 99.12; for secondary teachers 98.72; and for post-secondary, 87.64.

The subgroups of teaching specialties whose responses were analyzed to determine the extent of agreement were: early childhood education, upper elementary education, general secondary, vocational education, and special education. Other subgroups were administrative personnel, college affiliated teacher educators and census subdivisions (metropolitan, urban, rural).

Findings

The findings are detailed in Tables 4 through 9. They are summarized as follows:

1. Of the total of 52 competency statements presented in the survey 33 were rated by the respondents to be within a range which included the upper portion of the "highly desirable" through "essential."

2. In general the same competency statements were assigned to the same categories each time the participants as a group responded; that is, whether they were responding to its importance to learning, to beginning teaching or to professional teaching they tended to rate it the same.

3. Rank order correlations comparing the individual subgroup selections with those of all participants as a total group suggest that the subgroups selected the same competencies and placed them in about the same order as did the group as a whole. It was found that the probability of such arrangements occurring by chance is less than .01. See Tables 12 through 14.

4. Rank order correlations comparing the individual subgroups' scores, one with the others, suggest that the subgroups each individually selected the same competencies as the others and arranged them in about the same order of importance. Here again it was found that the probability of such arrangements occurring by chance is less than .01. See Table 15.

5. Scores indicated that respondents placed higher levels of importance on certain of the competencies for professional teaching than they did to the same competencies for initial teaching.

Conclusions

It may be inferred from the responses of the participants in this study that there are particular teacher competencies which may be considered to be generic in that they are consistently rated as either "essential" or "highly desirable" to effective teacher performance by professional educators from a variety of teaching specialities.

Further investigations are underway to determine the extent to which the conclusions drawn from this study are valid. One approach to reviewing the validity and generic qualities of these competencies will be investigated by using teacher performance assessment instruments designed around the target competencies. If it should be found that teachers from a variety of teaching

specialities who rate high on these particular competencies experience greater success in guiding their students toward the learning objectives than do teachers who do not possess these competencies to as great an extent, then the aforementioned conclusions might be further validated.

Other studies currently investigating the generic qualities and validity of these competencies include relating teacher performance of these competencies to learner progress in a variety of classroom settings, establishing theoretical propositions regarding the competencies and verifying the facts, definitions, and principles used to substantiate their logic, and searching professional literature for related investigations focused on the same or similar competency statements.

Educational and Scientific Importance of the Study

A list of generic teacher competencies verified systematically by a wide cross section of professional educators can be of value to researchers engaged in assessing teacher performance and those engaged in designing and assessing teacher education programs. They can also provide a foundation for further investigations of the professional needs of teachers.

As regards immediate application of the findings, the identified and verified statements have been used to design and develop teacher performance assessment instruments for beginning teacher certification. These instruments are being piloted during the 1977-78 school year with thousands of beginning teachers throughout Georgia with a view toward their revision and eventual use (1980) as valid and reliable beginning teacher performance assessment instruments for certification purposes.

Table 1

Professional Personnel Sample Reported by Major Subgroups

Subgroups	Estimated Number of Persons in Subgroup	Number of Respondents in Subgroup	Percentage of Subgroup in Sample	*Confidence Limits
Teachers	58,525	3,650	6.2	99.99
Administrators	4,820	369	6.4	72.42
College Faculty	1,111	649	58.4	98.22
Total	64,456	4,668	7.2	99.99

*Tolerable error $\pm .05$

Table 2

Distribution of Sample by Teacher, Administrator, and Faculty Subgroups

Groups and Subgroups	Estimated Total in Subgroup	Number of Respondents in Group	Percentage of Subgroup in Sample	*Confidence Limits
Elementary (K-7)	31,537	1,632	5.2	98.72
Primary (K-3)	13,790	(799)	(5.8)	91.98
Intermediate (4-7)	17,747	(833)	(4.7)	92.32
Secondary	20,782	1,460	7.0	98.26
General Subjects	16,298	(1,164)	(7.1)	96.60
Vocational Subjects	4,484	(296)	(6.6)	71.54
Post-Secondary	1,235	377	30.1	83.84
Special Education	4,971	181	3.6	58.78
Administrative	4,820	369	6.4	72.42
Teaching	-	(60)	-	-
Non-Teaching	-	(249)	-	-
Other	-	(60)	-	-
College Faculty (Education)	1,111	649	58.4	98.22
Total	64,456	4,668	7.2	99.99

*Tolerable error $\pm .05$

Table 3

Georgia's Local Educational Agency (LEA) Personnel Sample by Census Subdivisions

Census Subdivisions	Estimated No. of LEA in Subdivision	Number of Respondents in Subdivision	Percentage of Subdivision in Sample	*Confidence Limits
Metropolitan	23,424	1,640	7.0	98.82
Central City	(10,541)	(868)	(8.2)	(93.56)
Non-central City	(12,883)	(772)	(6.0)	(91.46)
Urban	25,181	1,753	7.0	99.06
Rural	9,956	626	6.3	87.88
Total	58,561	4,019	6.0	99.99

*Tolerable error $\pm .05$

Table 4
List of 52 Statements Contained in the
Competency Verification Survey Instrument

Item Number	Competency Statement
* 1.	Specifies (writes, selects, formulates) the learning objectives for the activities (lessons, units, etc.) which he/she plans to teach.
* 2.	Specifies (designs, selects, formulates) the teaching procedures for the learning activities (lessons, units, etc.) such that they are likely to accomplish the learning objectives.
* 3.	Includes in his/her teaching plans instructional content which is directly related to the objectives to be acquired by the learners.
* 4.	Plans instruction to be compatible with the learners' personal capabilities and needs.
5.	When planning for instruction he/she seeks, accepts, and uses students' ideas.
* 6.	When planning for instruction he/she makes provision for the appropriate use of a variety of teaching techniques, methods, and materials.
7.	Plans the long range (semester or school year) instructional program which he/she will teach.
8.	Selects and uses commercial tests and other such standard devices to determine learners' needs or the extent of their progress.
* 9.	Develops and uses his/her own methods and materials (such as teacher-made tests) to determine learner needs and progress.
*10.	Uses a variety of sources from which to get information about the needs and/or progress of individual learners (records, observation, conferences, etc.).
*11.	Refers learners (as need becomes evident) to specialists within the school system or, if appropriate, to outside agencies.
*12.	Organizes time, space, materials and equipment for instruction.
*13.	Arranges learners into appropriate groupings for instruction (small groups, whole class, tutorial setting, etc.).
*14.	Explains to learners the purpose of the learning activities they are to engage in and gives them a general overview of what is to happen and/or what has happened.
15.	Before he/she begins instruction he/she informs the learners how difficult it may be for them to acquire the new learning.
16.	Conveys to his/her students (during instruction) the impression that he/she knows what is to be done, has a means of doing it, and will probably be successful.
*M	= 2.15 or higher

- *17. Individualizes instruction through the appropriate use of recommended approaches to organization for learning (e.g., grouping) and the selection and use of instructional materials which are compatible with the differences among learners in their capacities to learn, and their styles and rates of learning.
- *18. Demonstrates skill and in-depth understanding of the subjects common to his/her teaching specialty.
- *19. During teaching he/she gives directions clearly and explains content so that learners understand.
- *20. Reinforces (supports and encourages) the efforts of learners during instruction.
- 21. During instruction he/she encourages learners to elaborate on their contributions and responses.
- 22. Uses recommended techniques for formulating, asking and responding to questions during instruction.
- 23. Uses a variety of difficulty levels of questions during instruction.
- *24. Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching and learning and for the subject he/she is teaching at the time.
- *25. Makes appropriate use of a variety of instructional techniques, methods, and materials during instruction.
- 26. Seeks, accepts, and uses students' ideas as part of his/her teaching procedure.
- *27. Adjusts teaching plans to changes in conditions as they normally arise (interruptions, proposed lesson "doesn't take", resources didn't arrive, etc.).
- *28. Guides interaction among learners and between him/her self and learners so as to discourage the occurrence of disruptive behavior.
- *29. Handles disruptive behavior and conflicts among learners objectively.
- *30. Arranges and adjusts the physical environment for instruction (room temperature, seating, lighting, floor arrangement, etc.).
- *31. Provides a learning environment which is attractive, interesting, and orderly.
- 32. Obtains, organizes, and stores the instructional material and equipment.
- 33. Performs managerial routines (attendance, filing, recording, etc.).
- *34. Uses communication techniques which foster comfortable interpersonal relationships (accepts constructive suggestions, responds to cues of concern, expresses humor when appropriate, etc.) beyond, as well as within the learning environment.
- 35. Fosters comfortable interpersonal relationships with the learners whom he/she instructs, whether outside or within the instructional setting.
- *36. Helps learners develop positive concepts of themselves (helps learners see their uniqueness, and encourages confidence and self-respect).

*M = 2.15 or higher

- #37. Fosters comfortable relationships among learners and between learners and others in the instructional setting.
- #38. Works cooperatively with co-workers, subordinates, supervisory personnel, and with members of the community (including parents where appropriate).
- 39. Avoids communicating strong forms of criticism to learners about their undesirable behavior.
- 40. Communicates to others, both within and outside the instructional setting, the attitudes and feelings he/she intends them to receive.
- #41. Generally communicates his/her ideas well both orally and in writing (discusses, presents, informs, explains, writes, etc.).
- #42. Receives and interprets the ideas and attitudes presented to him/her by others (listens, relates, understands, etc.).
- 43. Obtains information about the effectiveness of his/her instructional program.
- #44. Analyzes evaluative information concerning his/her instructional program.
- #45. Uses information about the effectiveness of his/her instructional program to revise it when and where necessary.
- 46. Carries out the recommended policies and procedures of the school district.
- 47. When appropriate or necessary he/she dissents in a constructive manner.
- #48. Determines his/her professional needs through self-evaluation and engages in a professional self-improvement program.
- #49. Exhibits professional traits of character (prompt, regular attendance, prepared for obligations, etc.).
- #50. Expresses a positive personal attitude toward the teaching profession.
- 51. Is an active member of a professional organization appropriate to his/her teaching specialty or assignment.
- 52. Participates in school related community activities.

*M = 2.15 or higher

Table 2
Highest Twenty Statements as Ranked According to Mean Scores: Enhancement of Student Learning

Rank Order	Competency Statement	Mean Score	Low Score	High Score
1	#19 During teaching he/she gives directions clearly and explains content so that the learners understand.	2.77	2.62 (CC)	2.85 (SP)
2	#20 Reinforces (supports and encourages) the efforts of learners during instruction.	2.64	2.47 (CC)	2.82 (SP)
3	#24 Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching and learning and for the subject he/she is teaching at the time.	2.62	2.38 (CC)	2.71 (NCC)
4	#18 Demonstrates skill and in-depth understanding of the subjects common to his/her teaching specialty.	2.57	2.37 (CC)	2.66 (NCC)
5	#27 Adjusts teaching plans to changes in conditions as they normally arise (interruptions, proposed lesson "doesn't take," resources, didn't arrive, etc.).	2.52	2.27 (CC)	2.64 (NCC)
6	#36 Helps learners develop positive concepts of themselves (helps learners see their uniqueness, and encourages confidence and self-respect).	2.50	2.31 (CC)	2.73 (SP)
7	#12 Organizes time, space, materials and equipment for instruction.	2.49	2.30 (CC)	2.54 (URB)
8	#4 Plans instruction to be compatible with the learners' capabilities and needs.	2.48	2.30 (CC)	2.65 (SP)
9	#23 Handles disruptive behavior and conflicts among learners objectively.	2.45	2.28 (CC)	2.64 (SP)
10	#26 Guides interaction among learners and between him/her self and learners so as to discourage the occurrence of disruptive behavior.	2.43	2.28 (CC)	2.60 (SP)
11	#50 Expresses a positive personal attitude toward the teaching profession.	2.41	2.23 (CC)	2.52 (VOC)
12	#25 Makes appropriate use of a variety of instructional techniques, methods, and materials during instruction.	2.39	2.27 (CC)	2.57 (SP)
13	#49 Exhibits professional traits of character (prompt, regular attendance, prepared for obligations, etc.).	2.39	2.25 (CC)	2.50 (VOC)
14	#10 Uses a variety of sources from which to get information about the needs and/or progress of individual learners (records, observation, conferences, etc.).	2.38	2.26 (SEC)	2.61 (SP)
15	#6 When planning for instruction he/she makes provision for the appropriate use of a variety of teaching techniques, methods, and materials.	2.37	2.20 (CC)	2.50 (SP)
16	#11 Refers learners (as need becomes evident) to specialists within the school system, or, if appropriate to outside agencies.	2.37	2.20 (CC)	2.73 (SP)
17	#48 Uses information about the effectiveness of his/her instructional program to revise it when and where necessary.	2.35	2.17 (CC)	2.53 (TE)
18	#1 Includes in his/her teaching plans instructional content which is directly related to the objectives to be acquired by the learners.	2.30	2.09 (CC)	2.57 (TE)
19	#1 Specifies (writes, selects, formulates) the learning objectives for the activities (lessons, units, etc.) which he/she plans to teach.	2.29	2.12 (CC)	2.57 (TE)
20	#14 Explains to learners the purpose of the learning activities they are to engage in and gives them a general overview of what is to happen and/or what has happened.	2.29	2.15 (PRM)	2.47 (VOC)

Note. PRM - Elementary Teachers: Primary
INT - Elementary Teachers: Intermediate
SEC - Secondary Teachers: General Subjects
VOC - Vocational Teachers
ADM - Administrative Personnel
TE - Teacher Educators: College Only

SP - Special Education Teachers
CC - Central City Teachers
NCC - Noncentral City Teachers
URB - Other Urban Area Teachers
RUR - Rural Area Teachers

Table 6
Rank Order Correlation Coefficients between Total Responses
Combined and Teaching Specialty Subgroups

Teacher Subgroup	Rank Order Correlation Coefficients*		
	Enhancement of Learning	Initial Certification	Professional Certification
Primary Grade	+ .87	+ .80	+ .81
Intermediate Grade	+ .91	+ .87	+ .89
Sceondary School	+ .90	+ .91	+ .91
Vocational Education	+ .88	+ .87	+ .88
Special Education	+ .77	+ .80	+ .71

*N=33, p .01 in all instances

Table 7

Rank Order Correlation Coefficients between Total Responses

Combined and Population Census Subgroups

Population Census Group	Rank Order Correlation Coefficients*		
	Enhancement of Learning	Initial Certification	Professional Certification
Metropolitan Central City	+ .85	+ .92	+ .94
Metropolitan Non-central city	+ .94	+ .96	+ .94
Urban	+ .88	+ .91	+ .86
Rural	+ .94	+ .98	+ .94

*N=33, p .01 in all instances

Table 8

Rank Order Correlation Coefficients Between Total Responses
Combined, and School Administrators and College Affiliated
Teacher Educators

Subgroups	Rank Order Correlation Coefficients*		
	Enhancement of Learning	Initial Certification	Professional Certification
Non-teaching Public School Personnel	+ .76	+ .94	+ .94
College Affiliated Teacher Educators	+ .62	+ .65	+ .58

*N=33, p .01 in all instances

Table 9

Rank Order Correlation Coefficients*Among the Teaching Specialities
Subgroups

Teacher	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Vocational	Special Educ.
Primary Grades	+1.00	+ .97	+ .81	+ .71	+ .91
Intermediate	--	+1.00	+ .89	+ .81	+ .88
Secondary	--	--	+1.00	+ .99	+ .92
Vocational	--	--	--	+1.00	+ .59
Special Educ.	--	--	--	--	+1.00

*N=33, p .01 in all instances